

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended). A connect[[or]]ing device constructed from a substantially planar template, said template comprising[[:] a centrally disposed base portion which includes a first side, a second side disposed opposite said first side, a top edge and a bottom edge, said base portion being flanked at its first and second sides by substantially wing-shaped lateral sections, each of said lateral sections being foldable along a respective demarcation line and provided with a plurality of openings, said demarcation line defining the border between a retaining wall portion and a bracing member, said bracing member having one side being disposed at an acute angle relative to the bottom edge of said base portion, said respective retaining wall portions and said base portion forming a generally U-shaped structure suitable for fitting at least one structural element when said respective retaining wall portions are folded relative to said base portion and said respective bracing members are folded along their demarcation lines comprising a base coupled to a first wall and a second wall, the first wall and second wall being at opposite ends of the base, and the first wall and second wall being substantially perpendicular to the base[;]]

~~a first bracing member coupled to a first end of the first wall of the generally U-shaped structure[;]]~~

~~a second bracing member coupled to a first end of the second wall of the~~

~~generally U-shaped structure[[;]] [[and]]~~

~~the first wall, second wall, first bracing member, and second bracing member having a plurality of openings.~~

Claim 2 (currently amended). The connect[[or]]ing device of claim 1, wherein ~~[[the]] said centrally disposed base portion is upwardly angled bent toward said respective bracing members when used as part of the generally U-shaped structure.~~

Claim 3 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 1 wherein the base is downwardly angled.

Claim 4 (currently amended). The connect[[or]]ing device of claim ~~[[1]]2~~, wherein ~~the generally U-shaped structure, the first bracing member, and the second bracing member are integral~~ said base portion is bent at said acute angle relative to said respective bracing members.

Claim 5 (currently amended). The connect[[or]]ing device of claim ~~[[1]]4~~, wherein ~~[[first]] each of said~~ bracing members and the second bracing member are generally disposed substantially perpendicularly relative to a respective retaining wall portion coupled to the first wall and the second wall of the generally U-shaped structure.

Claim 6 (currently amended). The connect[[or]]ing device of claim 1, wherein ~~the first~~

one side of each of said retaining wall portions is disposed at an obtuse angle relative to the top edge of said base portion[[,] when said retaining wall portions, said bracing members and said base portion are in unfolded template state second wall, first bracing member, and second bracing member are generally rectangular.

Claims 7 – 8 (canceled).

Claim 9 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 7 wherein the base is downwardly angled.

Claims 10 – 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (withdrawn). A connector comprising:

 a first bracket comprising a first planar member having a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side;
 a second planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first side of the first planar member coupled to the second side of the second planar member;

 a third planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first end of the first planar member coupled to the second end of the third planar member, wherein first planar member extends generally in a x-direction, the second planar member extends generally in a y-direction, and the third planar

member extends generally in a z-direction; and

 a plurality of openings positioned on the first, second, and third planar members, wherein the first bracket is adapted for use at a corner of a building.

Claim 14 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 13 further comprising:

 a second bracket comprising a fourth planar member having a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side;

 a fifth planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first side of the fourth planar member coupled to the second side of the fifth planar member;

 a sixth planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first end of the fourth planar member coupled to the second end of the sixth planar member, wherein fourth planar member extends generally in a x-direction, the fifth planar member extends generally in a y-direction, and the sixth planar member extends generally in a z-direction; and

 a plurality of openings positioned on the fourth, fifth, and sixth planar members, wherein the first bracket and the second bracket are positioned at the corner to define a space sized to receive a building element.

Claim 15 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 13 wherein the corner is an inner portion of the corner.

Claim 16 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 13 wherein the corner is an outer portion of the corner.

Claim 17 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 14 wherein the building element is a hip ridge beam, header beam, or other load-bearing beam.

Claim 18 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 13 wherein the first, second, and third planar members are integral.

Claim 19 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 14 wherein the fourth, fifth, and sixth planar members are integral.

Claim 20 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 14 wherein the first planar member is generally perpendicularly coupled to the second planar member and the third planar member.

Claim 21 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 14 wherein the fourth planar member is generally perpendicularly coupled to the fifth planar member and the sixth planar member.

Claim 22 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 14 wherein the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth planar members are generally rectangular.

Claim 23 (withdrawn). A connector comprising:

 a first bracket comprising a first planar member having a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side;

 a second planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first side of the first planar member generally perpendicularly coupled to the second side of the second planar member;

 a third planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first end of the first planar member generally perpendicularly coupled to the second end of the third planar member, wherein first planar member extends generally in a x-direction, the second planar member extends generally in a y-direction, and the third planar member extends generally in a z-direction, and wherein a plurality of openings are positioned on the first, second, and third planar members;

 a second bracket comprising a fourth planar member having a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side;

 a fifth planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first side of the fourth planar member generally perpendicularly coupled to the second side of the fifth planar member;

 a sixth planar member comprising a first end, a second end, a first side, and a second side, the first end of the fourth planar member generally perpendicularly coupled to the second end of the sixth planar member, wherein fourth planar member extends generally in a x-direction, the fifth planar member extends generally in a y-

direction, and the sixth planar member extends generally in a z-direction; and a plurality of openings positioned on the fourth, fifth, and sixth planar members, wherein the first bracket and the second bracket are positioned at a corner of a building to define a space sized to receive a building element.

Claim 24 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 23 wherein the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth planar members are generally rectangular.

Claim 25 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 23 wherein the corner is an inner portion of a corner.

Claim 26 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 23 wherein the corner is an outer portion of a corner.

Claim 27 (withdrawn). The connector of claim 23 wherein the building element is a hip ridge beam, header beam, or other load-bearing beam.

Claim 28 (new). The connecting device of claim 1, wherein said template is of substantially unitary construction.

Claim 29 (new). A connecting device constructed from a substantially planar and unitary template, said template comprising a centrally disposed base portion which

includes at least two oppositely disposed sides that are being flanked by substantially wing-shaped lateral sections, each of said lateral sections being foldable along a respective demarcation line and provided with a plurality of openings, said demarcation line defining the border between a retaining wall portion and a bracing member, said respective retaining wall portions and said base portion forming a generally U-shaped structure suitable for fitting at least one structural element when said respective retaining wall portions are folded relative to said base portion and said respective bracing members are folded along their demarcation lines with said centrally disposed base portion being inclined relative to said folded bracing members.

Claim 30 (new). The connecting device of claim 29, wherein said centrally disposed base portion is inclined toward said folded bracing members, said inclination being variable to adjust the pitch of said base portion.

Claim 31 (new). The connecting device of claim 29, wherein said centrally disposed base portion is inclined at approximately 90° relative to said folded bracing members.